



Good Death

The Crucible



Hughes
96

Lady Death®

“The Crucible #1/2”



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LADY DEATH: THE CRUCIBLE #1/2

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THE ENDLESS GRAVEYARD,
FIVE YEARS AGO.

ONCE THIS REALM WAS
HELL, LUCIFER'S DOMAIN.

SCREAMS OF THE DAMNED
AND MADNESS PERVERSED.
THE CONSTANT TORRENT
OF ENDLESS SUFFERING
SOUNDED LIKE AN INSANE
RITUAL OF MASS MISERY.

BUT WITH A SINGLE SWEEPING MONUMENTAL
GESTURE, LADY DEATH MADE IT TO HER LIKING.

NOW IT'S A COLD, SILENT, SOLITARY
PLACE STEEPED IN DARKNESS.

CLOUDS STRETCH FROM HORIZON
TO HORIZON LIKE A FUNERAL
SHROUD. A STORM BREWS.

ON A TYPICAL EVENING, THE GENTLE
RHYTHM OF NOOSES SWAYING IN THE
BREEZE LULL THE QUEEN OF THE
DEAD AND DYING INTO A DEEP,
SATISFYING SLEEP.

BUT NOT TONIGHT.

TONIGHT, SOMETHING
IS AMISS.

SOMEONE,
SOMETHING HAS
BEEN LOOTING MY
POSSESSIONS
OF LATE.

FROM THE
CREAKS IN THE
FLOORBOARDS AND
THE HEINOS STINK I'D
WAGER THE CULPRITS
HAVE RETURNED!

GOOD.
NOW I'LL GET
TO THE BOTTOM
OF THIS!





THAT'S RIGHT,
BOW BEFORE ME!

HA HA HA!

BIZARRE!
THEY'VE STOLEN ALL
MANNER OF OBJECTS, SOME
INCONSEQUENTIAL,
SOME VALUABLE!

WHY?

SUICIDE!

WHAT?
FROM ABOVE!

RRRGHHH!

INTER OPERI

ONTSISIDERS
CANNOT GAZE
UPON THE UNHOLY
RANSSACK!

YOUR PRESENCE
HERE IS FORBIDDEN!

MY PRESENCE?
YOU REALIZE WHO
YOU'RE THREATENING?!

I AM DEATH!
LADY DEATH!

AND YOU'VE
JUST MADE A GRAVE
MISTAKE!





CALLING UPON AN INHERENT POWER DEEP WITHIN HER, LADY DEATH MANIFESTS HER SOUL SWORD, DARKNESS, FORGED FOR HER BY HELL'S BLACKSMITH CREMATOR.

YOU SPEAK IN RIDDLES, OUTLANDER, BUT YOUR INTENTIONS ARE CLEAR.

PRAY TO YOUR MAKER, SINESTRA. MAYBE HE WILL SHOW YOU MERCY. COUNT ON NONE FROM ME!

AS YOU WISH, SSSOFT SSSKIN!

SHUGAKA

SKIT

SUDDENLY THE HARSH ODOR OF ASH AND BRIMSTONE OVERCOMES THE CAVERNS AS THE AIR IS CHARGED WITH A FEARSOME, ANCIENT EVIL ENERGY.

WAIT, SINESTRA.

IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS CHAOS: THE TIME BEFORE CREATION. A SWIRLING MASS OF UNCERTAINTY, FORMLESS, WITHOUT ORDER, WITHOUT BOUNDARIES.

BEINGS OF INDESCRIPTABLE, PRIMAL POWER WAGED WAR ON ALL UNIVERSAL PLANES. HIERARCHIES ROSE AND FELL. HOLOCAUSTS ABOUNDED IN CONSTANT, BLINDING DEATHFLASHES.

BUT IN TIME AND THROUGH TRICKERY, CHAOS LED TO CREATION AND THE UNIVERSE GREW CALM AND DEFINED BY LIGHT AND DARK.

YET A FEW REFUSED ORDER AND HELD TO THE ANCIENT WAYS OF CHAOS. THIS BEING TOWERING OVER SINESTRA WAS AMONG THEM.

LORD GENOCIDE!

W-WHAT
BRINGSSSS YOU HERE,
LORD?

POWER.

THIS GRAVEWORLD IS UNIQUE. I HAPPENED ON IT AS I WAS SCANNING THE WORLDS WAY FOR SITES TO RANSACK.

STRANGE. IT EXISTS PARALLEL TO HELL, BUT SLIGHTLY OUT OF PHASE OF IT. DID THIS SOFT SKIN BRING IT ABOUT OR IS MY LITTLE BROTHER LUCIFER UP TO HIS PETTY TRICKS AGAIN?





SHE RUNS
HEAD ON TO ATTACK.
HER MIND CLOUDED
WITH ANGER.

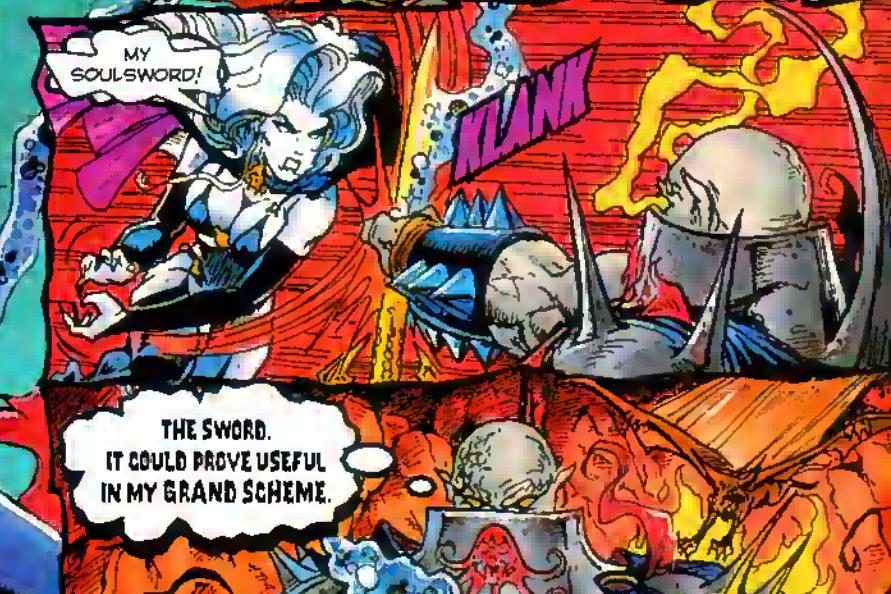
SUCH FOLLY.

BUT THE
INHERENT POWER SHE
WIELDS IN THAT SWORD
...REMARKABLE!

INSOLENT
CHILD.



SO YOU
LEAD THESE SCAVENGERS
AND VAGABONDS!
GENOCIDE,
YOU WILL RUE
THIS DAY!



MY
SOULSWORD!

BLANK



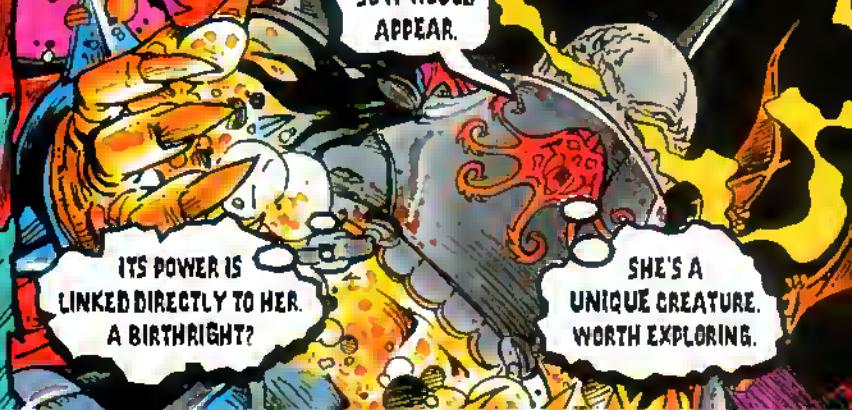
THE SWORD.
IT COULD PROVE USEFUL
IN MY GRAND SCHEME.



DARKNESS
IS NOT FOR
THE TAKING!



SO IT WOULD
APPEAR.



ITS POWER IS
LINKED DIRECTLY TO HER.
A BIRTHRIGHT?



SHE'S A
UNIQUE CREATURE.
WORTH EXPLORING.

UNHAND ME!

A MIND
MERGE IS IN
ORDER!

WITH A MINIMAL EFFORT, GENOCIDE
SEIZES CONTROL OF LADY DEATH —

— AND PROBES THE INNER
RECESSES OF HER MIND

AAARRRRGGHHH!

AS I SUSPECTED,
SO MUCH MORE, HIDDEN IN
HER SUBCONSCIOUS IS A LOST
HERITAGE SHE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT.
THE POWER THAT FUELS
THE SWORD IS THE KEY!

IT'S A REALM BEYOND —
A WARRIOR REALM.

INTERESTING.
LUCIFER HAS TWISTED
THIS WOMAN'S MIND FOR HIS
OWN DEVICES. SUCH PETTY GAMES.
IT WILL BE YOUR UNDOING.
LUCIFER, I GUARANTEE IT.

Rite, Vandala! Now and forevermore, you are pledged to loyalty, bravery, and above all Heroism. You are a WARRIOR. You are a VALKYRIE!

THIS REALM, ASSARD.
IT'S JUST WHAT I'VE SEARCHED
FOR! SUCH POWER! HOW...CORRUPTIBLE.
IT IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO
CONSUMMATE MY SCHEME.

I shall make
that name proud,
VULNAVIA!

AWAY!
YOU'VE SERVED MY
PURPOSE.



FOR A MILLENNIA.
I'VE DEDICATED MY RESOURCES
TO RANSACKING REALMS IN
SEARCH OF OBJECTS OF
INFINITE POWER.

WITH THE COMING
OF THE JUDGMENT ERA,
HEAVEN AND HELL WILL BE LOCKED
IN BATTLE, CONSUMED
WITH EACH OTHER.

THEY WILL BE
RIPE FOR THE PICKING!

AND WITH THE POWER
THAT LIES IN ASGARD,
I WILL FINALLY BE ABLE TO
ELIMINATE THE PRIM AND
PROPER UNIVERSAL ORDER, AND ONCE
AGAIN, CHAOS! SHALL REIGN!

YOU HAD YOUR
CHANCE, SINESTRA.
YOU FAILED.

PREPARE
TO LEAVE.

NO, PLEASESS
MY LORD! NOT AFTER
WHAT SHE'S DONE!

MY FACE!
THIS ISN'T OVER!

WHAT ABOUT THE
GRABBINGSSS?!

FORGET THEM!

I'VE IMPORTANT
MATTERS TO
ATTEND TO.

WHAT WAS
THAT ALL ABOUT?

THE END.

NEXT: LEARN ALL THE ANSWERS IN:

**LEAD TO DEATH:
the CRUCIBLE!**

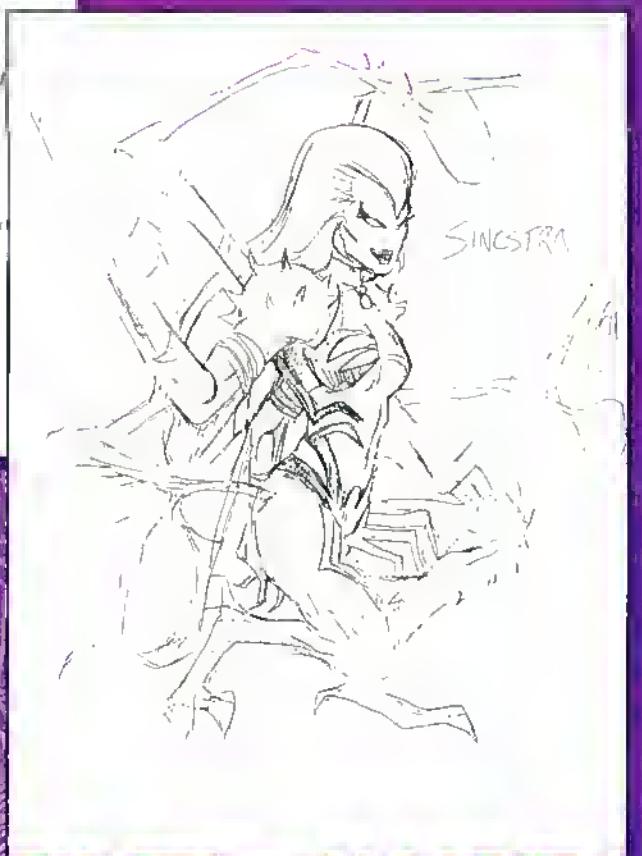
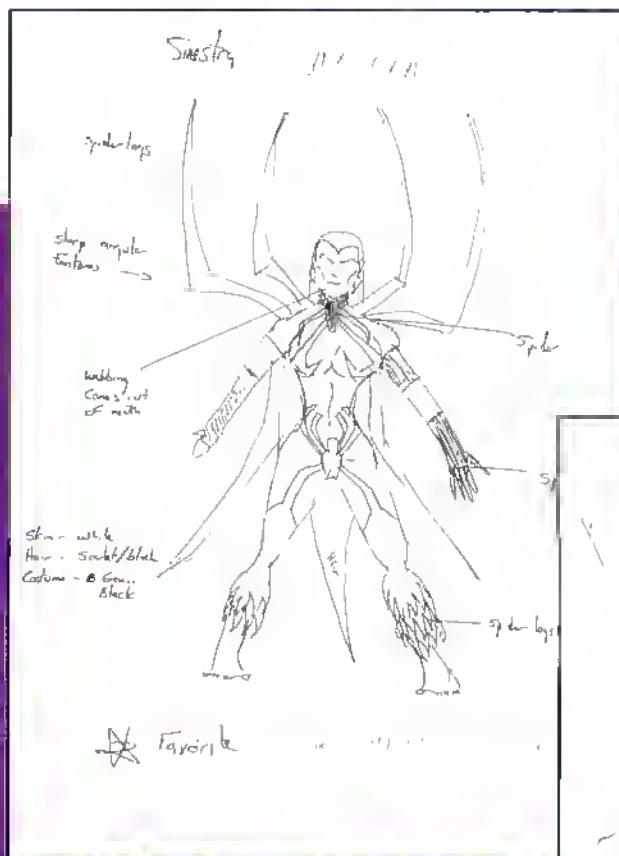
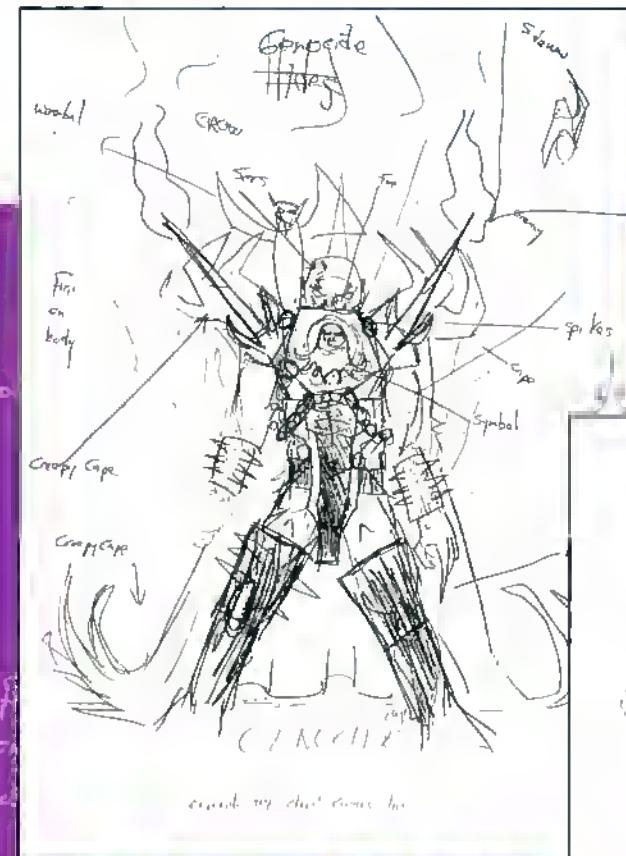
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sketchbook

BEHIND THE SCENES GOODIES

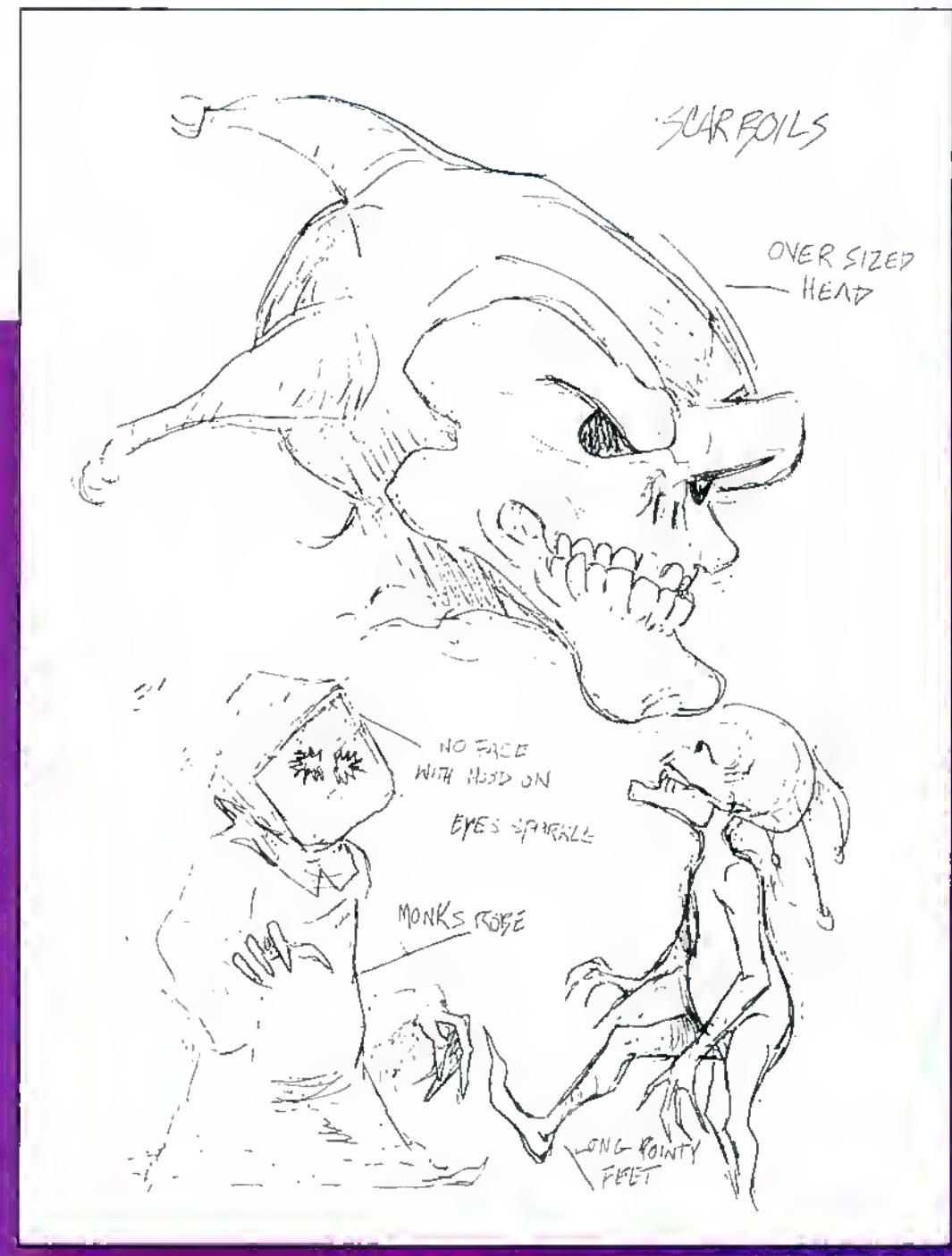
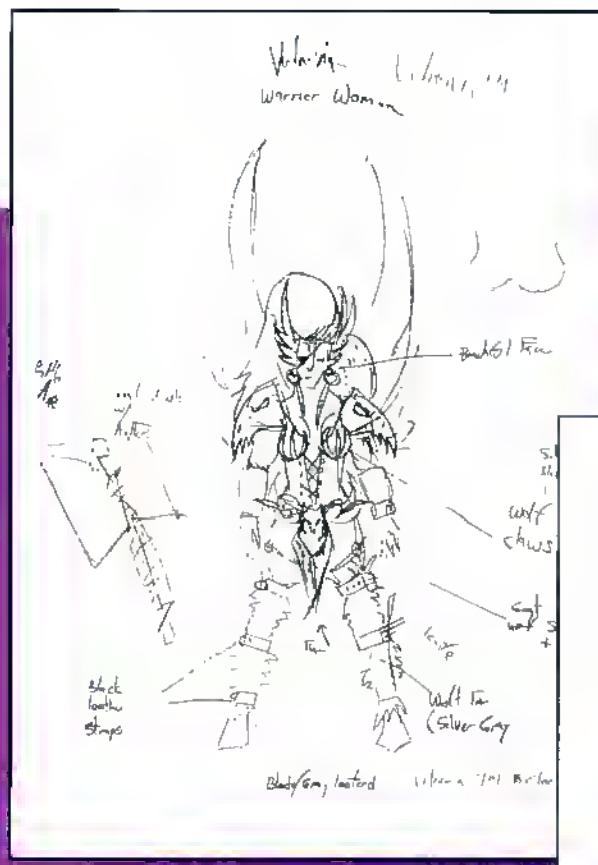
SOME NEW CHARACTERS APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE. THEY ALL START WITH A INITIAL CHARACTER DESIGN BY BRIAN PULIDO, THEN STEVEN HUGHES TIGHTENS UP THEIR FINAL LOOK. HERE'S A SNEAK PEEK AT THE GENESIS OF GENOCIDE...

... AND SINESTRA.



Sketch

THE NASTY VULNAVIA AND SCARBOILS ALSO APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE.
HERE'S A LOOK AT THE THOUGHTS THAT WENT INTO THEIR CREATION.



Sketches

HERE'S A LOOK AT BRIAN PULIDO'S FIRST HANDWRITTEN DRAFT FOR THE FIRST FEW PAGES OF THIS ISSUE, ALONG WITH PULIDO'S LAYOUT NOTES.

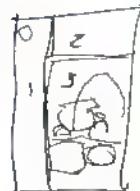
①

2nd p

CAPE

1 ① Est Endless Graveyard.

Caption: Lady Death's Endless Graveyard
Five years ago...



⑥ Est shot - LD's mansion + graveyard
Scarabs Scarying up stick held lanterns.

Big shot → ② LD, foreground, is thinking in her bed, but awake. In the background the Scarabs are taking the "eternity wall".

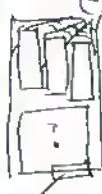
*The Scarabs look cartoonish, but are serious. Their actions are set of funny, but their intent isn't. Since they have Stabby arms + legs - they can't FLY.

LD notes

LD: Ah Finally. My possessions
have lost few nights.
② I hear the culprits

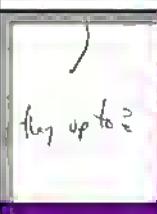
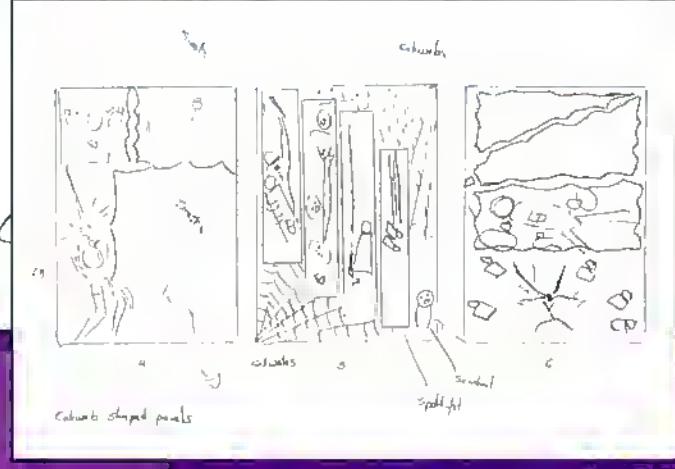
lightning

webs



(2) ① Hot Panel - Scarabs walking down wall
(Sands of time) (jaws)

on marble and



Specter

A BLAST FROM THE PAST! HERE ARE SOME STEVEN HUGHES LADY DEATH CONCEPT SKETCHES FROM WAY BACK IN 1991-92.



WIZARD®



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Lady Death™

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Brian Pulido, President, Chaos! Comics